



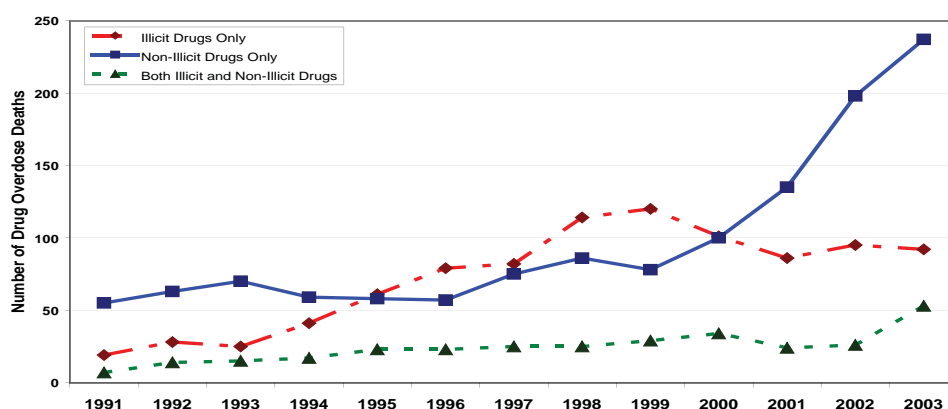
Prescription Drugs

Background

In a study by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Utah leads the nation in nonmedical painkiller abuse. The information collected in the study infers that most prescription drug abusers are under the age of 25. Of those abusing prescription painkillers, 7.88 percent are 12 to 17 years old, 13.49 percent are 18 to 25 years old, and just 4.32 percent are over age 25. The Utah Department of Health reported that 308 Utahns died from prescription drug overdose last year. That number is twice as high as deaths caused from illegal drugs.

Prescription Drug Use in Utah

**Number of Drug Poisoning Deaths
by Drug Category and Year
Utah 1991-2003**



From the Utah Medical Examiner's Office.

Status in Addressing the Issue:

- The Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant (SPF SIG) has identified Prescription Drug Overdose as a priority. \$1,629,050 of this grant will be used at the local community level.
- Utah State Office of Education administers and coordinates the statewide implementation of the K-12 Prevention Dimensions substance abuse prevention program.
- The Local Authority's Prevention System implements prevention activities and programs such as PRIME For Life, first offender programs, life skills training and other education programs designed to raise awareness of the dangerousness of abusing prescription drugs and teaching skills on how to avoid drug use.

Quick Facts

- In October 2005, the Health Department convened a workgroup to address deaths due to prescription pain medications in Utah. Three action steps were recommended to prevent further deaths:
 1. Educate health care providers about appropriate use of opiates for pain management
 2. Improve education to patients about appropriate use of opiates for pain management
 3. Educate the public about the risks of adverse outcomes of medical and nonmedical use of opiates.
- The Utah Addiction Center established a physician training to inform physicians regarding the appropriate use of opiates for pain management.
- The Assessment and Referral Services had an on-going pain management study to gather information to assist in the prevention of unintentional deaths.